

Gung ho

Business



Gung Ho is an American comedy movie released in 1986. The story of the movie is about the takeover of an American car plant by a Japanese corporation named "Assan Motors". In a small town named "Hadleyville" in Pennsylvania, the local auto plant is closed for nine months which supplied most of the jobs in the town. The former foreman of the plant goes to Tokyo and does a presentation to convince the "Assan Motors" corporation to re-open the plant and provide jobs for the town. The company agrees and the executive team comes to US. Upon their arrival, they require a high standard of efficiency and quality of production from US workers.

Because American workers were so desperate to get a job, Japanese executives pursued to take advantage of it. The employees are not allowed to form a union and they are paid lower wages. All the employees were required to go around the factory, so that everyone knows every job in the factory. As the plant began to operate and Japanese people and Americans start to work together, culture conflicts occur between them. For example, the executive challenged the workers to do morning exercise all together before they start working since it is a common routine in Japan.

However, Americans find it humorous and show attitudes of ignorance to the morning exercise. The executive goes around the plant to check the performance of the workers and sometimes judges them to work better which are very irritating to American workers. They wanted the workers to work faster and produce as many cars as they can. During the lunch time, the Japanese executives eat their meal using chopsticks which look funny to the American workers. Also, the Japanese executives take bath together in

the river which Americans find it very ridiculous. Stevenson works as a liaison between Japanese executives and American workers.

Kazuhiro is the top executive of the plant who tells Stevenson to inform the employees to produce 15, 000 cars in one month in order reach the efficiency standard of Japanese car plant. Kazuhiro was trained in a special program of executives to become tough and strict because he was judged and pointed to be too weak and lenient executive. Working as the top executive in the car plant in America is the last chance for him to change his lenient behavior and become a stronger leader. Meanwhile, Stevenson calls a meeting with the workers to inform about the 5, 000 car production and convince them to do it. However, as soon as the meeting starts, he hears too many complaints about the work pressure at the plant from the workers. Stevenson tells a lie to the employees that they have to produce 13, 000 cars in one month in order to reach the best production and efficiency and raise the wage because he could not dare to say 15, 000 cars when there are already enough complaints from the employees. However, the workers find out the truth after a while. Because of overworks and pressure, the employees eventually go on strike and the plant becomes about to close.

Stevenson does a speech to the town people to again convince them to work for the town and for their family and show that they are better than Japanese people. Stevenson and the executives start to work in the plant again which also encouraged the workers to come back and go for the way to make 15, 000 cars. Kazuhiro begins to understand and have good relations with the workers. Even the executives start to work with the employees to make 15,

000 cars. The CEO of the corporation arrives in US and visits the plant. However, he finds out that they are short of six cars to make 15, 000.

If they are short of even one car, the plant would have been closed. However, the CEO sees that Japanese executives and American workers cooperated well and worked hard. He said " Good team" to the people and the plant is no longer need to close. From the movie, I have noticed some interesting scenes that showed culture differences. For example, when Stevenson was doing a presentation to convince the Japanese executive to open a plant in his town, he spoke casually and even used some slangs in his speech which may have shocked some Japanese people. On the other hand, Japanese executives kept in sitting in silence and did not ask any questions.

They were too serious and quiet that Stevenson even doubted if they knew English and understood his speech. As the executives live in America, they start to get used to American life style little by little. Especially Kazuhiro likes the American idea of everyone is special and there are much more things to enjoy in life despite work. Kazuhiro slowly realizes that he has lived only for career and did not spend good time with his family and did not care them well. When he first came to America, he was always wondering why everyone thinks they are special in America. They are just a part of the team according to him.

There are many good lessons in this movie about management and leadership. When managing workers, it is important to first understand their culture and lifestyle. It is not a good idea to force workers to follow the policy that is implemented in a different place. Depending on the place and different culture, managers have to create different policies in order to

create a good teamwork. I think rather acting bossy and strict to the employees, treating them nice as friends would lead to build a good relationship between the manager and workers, and it could encourage the workers to work harder because it creates trust between them.